



The Importance of: Youth Leadership Life Skills Development!

A Research Study Conducted By The Journal of Extension (JOE)

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Abstract

This research indicates youth participation in leadership life skills developmental programs is positively related to perceived leadership life skill development. The study also indicated that the level of leadership life skill development in youth increased as the level of leadership training, mentoring and participation increased.

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It's estimated that **25%** of our nation's youth engage in "high-risk" activities-heavy alcohol, tobacco, or drug use, delinquency, and poor school performance or non-attendance. An additional **25%** are considered to be at moderate risk. Almost one-third of our youth fail to graduate from high school. Teen pregnancy is increasing at an alarming rate. Every day in America, **40** teenagers give birth to their third child. Because of these high-risk activities, youth become a burden to society instead of contributors.

The number of our nation's youth exhibiting at-risk behavior points to a lack of skills necessary for adulthood-skills in working with others, understanding self, communicating, making decisions, and exemplifying leadership. These skills are required by adults for everyday living and are often called leadership life skills. The development of life skills allows youth to cope with their environment by making responsible decisions, having a better understanding of their values, and being better able to communicate and get along with others.

In addition, it was discovered that over **70%** of youth in the U.S. never reach and/ or achieve their highest potential in childhood or adulthood, due to a lack of developing adequate and above average leadership life skills.

The development of such skills through experiential learning is the cornerstone of youth leadership programs. Leadership life skills training and development intervenes in a youth's life before the seeds of irresponsible behavior are planted. As JOE research study discovered, skills and attitudes formed during youth carry over into adulthood.